

**WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes-March 9, 2005**  
**Indiana Government Center South, Conference Center Rooms 4 & 5**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Voting members present:**

Allen County-Paul McAfee  
Cass County-Mercedes Brugh  
DNR-Steve Morris  
Huntington County-Mike Mettler  
Miami County-Ken Einselen  
Parke County-John Isaacs  
Sullivan County-John Gettinger  
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky)  
Neiburger  
Vigo County-Keith Ruble  
Wells County-Keith Huffman

**Proxies:**

Adams County-John Gettinger  
Carroll County-John Gettinger  
Fountain County-John Gettinger  
Posey County-John Gettinger  
Wabash County-John Gettinger

**Guests:**

Ruth Isaacs

**Voting members absent w/o proxy:**

Gibson County  
Jay County (proxy received late)  
Knox County  
Vermillion County

**Nonvoting Members present:**

Tim Kroeker-IDEM (alternate)  
Malia Savarino-DNR-DHPA (alternate)  
John Leckie-INDOT

**Nonvoting Members not present:**

Office of Tourism

**Commission and DNR Staff present:**

Ron James-WRHCC Exec. Director  
Cynthia Webb-DNR Outdoor Recreation  
Dale Brier-DNR Outdoor Recreation

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. Introductions, proxies, and quorum present.

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Lucky Neiburger added Executive Director's contract under New Business.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 12, 2005 MEETING MINUTES**

Lucky Neiburger made a motion to approve the minutes and Keith Huffman seconded. Minutes approved. Ron James presented the options of verbatim minutes or abridged minutes of around four pages long. Commission members chose the abridged.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT** (John G. distributed a written report at the meeting)

In addition, John reported that the Wabash Heritage Paddlefest, August 6-7, is going to be a big event. John also noted that the Partnership for Turtle Creek, of which John Gettinger is chairperson, was awarded "Farmer of the Year". John passed out copies of the Sullivan County SWCD Annual Report containing an article about the 8th grade rafting trip on the Wabash and an article by Ron James about the WRHCC.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** (mailed out with 3/9/05 meeting agenda)

Ron James passed out rosters he had made of the various committees designed to help with communications between committees and the commission. Ron also reported having a recent radio interview concerning the water trail project. Ron pointed out the members must prepare to answer questions concerning pollution's effect on recreation activities. After discussion, Steve Morris suggested the water trail committee should handle this.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Finance Report** (attached)

Steve Morris passed out the finance report. Steve said the most important line was the line that read total operating expenses. There is \$35,250.00 budgeted for the 2004-2005 year. There has been \$3,846.37 spent since the January meeting and there is \$27,446.23 left until the end of the fiscal year, June 30<sup>th</sup>. In the expenses submitted or to be submitted column, the legislative directories were \$100.00 instead of the \$50.00 that the commission had voted upon. Keith Huffman made a motion to accept the finance report and Lucky Neiburger seconded the motion. Motion passed.

At this time Lucky Neiburger suggested investing in a lobbyist, Gretchen Gutman, who formerly worked for the Senate Finance Committee. Lucky feels she would have valuable insight into budgetary means for funding the Corridor Fund. Mike Mettler asked if investing in a lobbyist was legal or feasible. Steve Morris noted it would require a contract. Mercedes Brugh suggested Gretchen as a guest speaker at one of our meetings.

During the finance report Ron questioned Malia Savarino about Historic Preservation having available funds for helping get the Wabash brochures printed. Malia said the budget was tight, no money was available, but she would talk to Steve Kennedy about it.

### **Legislative Committee Report**

Mercedes Brugh passed out a recapitulation of WRHCC's legislative initiative. Mercedes said updates are needed from a few commission members, as to their meetings with their legislators, before she can give the report to Senator Weatherwax. Mercedes drew attention to the columns listed as Senate Appropriations, Senate Tax & Fiscal Policy and House Ways and Means and noted they reflect the status of the legislator, such as vice-chair, chair, ranking member, etc. Mercedes pointed out that nobody has contacted Representative Ayres, Senator Kenley or Senator Meeks. Ron James said that he had spoken to Senator Meeks. John Gettinger commended Mercedes on her work.

Ron James and John Gettinger reported attending the Senate DNR Committee hearing on SB0060. Ron prepared an executive summary of SB0060 to provide to legislators.

### **Water Trail Report**

Mike Mettler reported the sign is finalized and will be ordered soon. The website on the sign is [www.banksofthewabash.org](http://www.banksofthewabash.org). A. Cullwell, a Purdue student, was hired to design the maps. Ongoing care of the access sites was discussed. Discussion on the Div. of Fish and Wildlife's proposed cooperative agreement was postponed to New Business.

### **Wabash Video Report**

Each Representative will receive a promotional video to aid in soliciting financial support for the corridor video. John Gettinger reported meeting with Don Foltz, past president of Wabash Valley Association (WVA), where he proposed WVA funding the project.

### **Education Report**

Judy Bengochea, Sullivan County SWCD, sent thanks for supporting the 8<sup>th</sup> grd. rafting.

June 14<sup>th</sup> Ron will attend the Delphi Teacher Seminar, and give a short presentation.

### **Newsletter Report**

At this time, Ron reported he has only three articles for the *L 'Esprit de Ouabache* newsletter. Send him any articles you might have for the newsletter.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Status of Banks of the Wabash (BOW) Bylaws**

The BOW new bylaws will be voted on at their April meeting. The proposed bylaws would expand focus of BOW to the entire 19 county Wabash River corridor.

#### **Wabash River Heritage Paddlefest**

The Southwestern Indiana Regional Development Commission, made up of Gibson County, Posey County, Warrick County and Vanderburgh County, is heading up planning for the Paddlefest. Former WRHCC member, Sherrell Marginet is involved in the planning. The Paddlefest is scheduled for August 6-7, 2005.

#### **WRHC Brochure Inventory Update**

There are 22 boxes of brochures at 500 copies per box. Lucky Neiburger moved to get bids on reprinting the brochure. Mike Mettler seconded. Motion passed. Steve Morris agreed to chair of a committee to reprint the brochure. After discussion on the value of distributing to all rest areas; current stock will be sent to those in advance of the Corridor.

#### **2005 Meeting Locations**

The May meeting will be at Logansport, July at Bluffton, September at Vigo County. IGC space has been reserved for November, 2005; January and March, 2006, meetings.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Letters Sent & Received** (report was sent with meeting agenda)

Ron James wrote to Sullivan County Soil & Water Conservation District in support of their Teach the River rafting trip.

Ron sent Thank You notes to those donating (a total of \$320) in memory of John Taylor.

#### **De-Trash the Wabash**

Keith Ruble announced a De-Trash the Wabash -Vigo will be on Earth Day, April 23, 2005. De-Trash the Wabash - Tippecanoe will take place on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005.

### **Indiana Paddlers Rendezvous & Water Trail “Grand Opening”**

Mike Mettler said the Water Trail signs may be up and access sites marked by summer. It was proposed that the water trail “grand opening” could be coordinated with the Indiana Paddlers Rendezvous in August and other river events this summer. Dale Brier recommended against promoting a Grand Opening until the maps are completed.

### **National River Rally**

Mike Mettler moved to spend \$750 for Ron James to attend the National River Rally in Keystone, CO., May 20 to 24, 2005. Keith Ruble second. Motion passed.

### **Executive Director Contract**

Keith Ruble moved the Commission offer to renew the Ron James’ Exec. Dir. Contract conditioned on Legislative funding. Lucky Neiburger second. Motion passed.

### **Cooperative Agreement with DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife**

Keith Ruble moved the Commission sign a cooperative agreement proposed by DNR Fish & Wildlife to permit placing water trail signs at DNR public access sites. Lucky Neiburger seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mercedes announced a Kite Fly at Little Turtle Waterway on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005. They will have kite flying in the morning and exhibition kite flying in the afternoon.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

#### **Comments by Commission Alternates**

Keith Ruble commented that he wanted a definitive answer as to whether state funds can match federal Wetland Reserve funds to pay more than appraised value to preserve land.

#### **Comments by Visitors**

None

#### **Final Comments by Commission Members**

Keith Huffman said the Wells County Chamber of Commerce recommended funding of the WRHCC video. For the July meeting, our hosts in Wells County will supply lunch.

Mercedes noted Transp. Enhanc. funds were not cut. She sent a Thank You to Gov. Daniels and INDOT. Proposed: a digital image of WRHC fund locations on the Corridor.

John Isaacs presented photos of recent Wabash River flooding in Parke County.

**Next Meeting-May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at Logansport-TBA, Mercedes Brugh-Invasive Species speaker.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Keith Ruble made a motion to adjourn and John Isaacs seconded. Meeting adjourned.